

For Information

Legislative Council Panel on Security

Removal of protesters from area outside Central Government Offices on 2 April 2004

Purpose

This note sets out the Administration's response to the various points raised by Members at the special meeting on 8 April 2004.

Background

2. At the special meeting, Members discussed the captioned subject with representatives from the Security Bureau, Administration Wing of the Chief Secretary for Administration's Office (Adm Wing) and Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF). A number of issues were raised for further response by the Administration after the meeting.

The Administration's response

Police guidelines on resistance control tactics

3. The resistance control tactics of the HKPF are in line with international standards and best practices. In this context, there are two types of "resistance" –

- (a) "passive resistance": physical inaction intended to obstruct but not to threaten; and
- (b) "defensive resistance": physical action intended to prevent control and might cause injury to oneself or others.

4. In dealing with passive resistance, the Police will employ "soft empty hand techniques" such as "pressure point control" and "transport wristlock". In dealing with defensive resistance, "hard hand techniques" such as "palm heel strike/stunning" and "iron wristlock takedown" are used. Oleoresin Capsicum Foam (commonly known as "pepper foam") may also be used. Please refer to [Annex A](#) for more details on "soft empty hand techniques" and "hard hand techniques".

5. The techniques and tactics referred to in para. 4 are considered “use of force” by the Police and hence the following general principles apply –

- (a) officers should not resort to the use of force unless strictly necessary;
- (b) officers may use only the minimum degree of force necessary to achieve the objective;
- (c) warning shall be given whenever possible;
- (d) force should cease immediately when the objective has been achieved; and
- (e) force used must be reasonable in the circumstances.

Relative timing of the injury of a Police officer and the removal of reporters by Police officers on 2 April 2004

6. At 6:10 a.m. on 2 April 2004, the Adm Wing requested the Police to clear the vehicular entrance to Central Government Offices (CGO) as it was approaching office hours.

7. At 6:25 a.m. and again at 6:40 a.m., the Police gave warnings to the protestors and asked them to clear the vehicular access to CGO and move to an adjacent pavement. The protestors did not attempt to comply with the Police’s requests.

8. At 6:42 a.m., the reporters covering the incident were requested to leave the operational area and were invited to continue their observations from behind the Police barriers immediately adjacent to the operational area. Most reporters complied with the request but about 10 refused. They took up positions in the centre of the operational area.

9. At 6:45 a.m., Police officers started removing protestors from the vehicular entrance to CGO to a designated area on the pavement about 30 metres away from CGO. Whilst engaged in the removal of protestors, a Police officer was bitten by a protestor and sustained injury to his hand. Another Police officer was kicked by a protestor resulting in an injury in the back. Simultaneously, other officers attempted to move the reporters who were in the way of officers taking removal action and to prevent people who had left the operational area from moving back into it.

10. At 7:10 a.m., the removal operation concluded.

Whether a government official had contacted a newspaper company at 4:30 a.m. on 2 April 2004 stating that removal action would be taken and requesting it to withdraw its reporters from the spot

11. No Government official involved in the operation on 2 April 2004 contacted the management of media organisations for the purpose. The Administration had no intention to prevent reporters from covering the incident, and did not do so.

Sequence of events relating to the requests of protestors and the respective responses of the Adm Wing on 1 and 2 April 2004

12. The sequence of events is set out at Annex B.

Suggestion that the Police should include in their internal guidelines certain actions and postures, such as “throat-locking” when dragging a person, which should be avoided when carrying out removal actions

13. The use of force by Police officers when exercising pressure point control on the mandibular angle, hypoglossal nerve and infra orbital nerve might have been taken as “throat-locking” by misconception. In fact, the use of pressure point control on the above-mentioned points should not cause permanent harm to the subject.

14. Training for Police officers on pressure point control already covers essential information on the tactics and guidelines about the use of force. Nevertheless, the issue will be kept closely in view to ensure that the best practice will be used in future applications and relevant training by the Police.

**Security Bureau
October 2004**

“Soft empty hand techniques” and “Hard hand techniques”

A. Soft empty hand techniques

Pressure point control

Pressure point control is applied to locations which are divided into two basic categories: **pressure points** and **motor nerve points**.

Pressure points are located on the head. These locations require a specific “method of application” (Touch Pressure) which allows an officer to establish control over the subject. Pressure point control can be used for controlling passive resistance or defensive resistance.

The motor nerve points are locations which are 3 to 5 inches in diameter and are located on the large muscle mass of the shoulders, arms and legs. Motor points are points on a muscle mass that are saturated with microscopic effector nerve tissue. Striking on these motor nerve points will result in a motor dysfunction, which will last for an average of 30 seconds to several minutes, giving the officer sufficient time to de-escalate and bring a subject under control.

Transport wristlock

The transport wristlock is designed to enable an officer to react to resistance from the escort position. It is a joint locking technique which requires a combination of equally applied pressure and counter-pressure. Pressure is applied in a two-step process: -

- (a) the subject’s forearm is elevated to nearly a vertical position with the elbow tucked into the officer’s side under the armpit; and
- (b) flexing the wrist downward until all of the slack is removed from the wrist, pressure is applied to the back of the hand on the index knuckle. Counter-pressure is achieved by stabilizing the subject’s elbow between the officer’s ribs and restraining arm.

B. Hard hand techniques

Palm heel strike

A palm heel strike can be delivered with the back of the hand, palm heel, outside or inside of the forearm (striking with the forearm muscles, not the bone of forearm) at the side of the neck of the subject. The technique is highly effective for controlling high level assaults and can be expected to create a mental stun lasting for 3 to 7 seconds.

Stunning

The Stunning Principle is “the stimulation of overwhelming sensory input that is sudden, intense and unexpected”. Stunning techniques are designed to be used when the officer is confronting a high level of resistance.

The average stun will last for an average of 3 to 7 seconds and will allow an officer sufficient time for follow up control. However, it is not uncommon for stunning techniques to last for several minutes or longer, as the length of any stun may depend upon the resisting subject’s mental ability to concentrate.

Iron wrist lock takedown

Quick cuffing is designed to temporarily control a subject by restraining the wrists, and thereby restricting the subject’s arm and hand movements. Studies in the USA have indicated that most resistance during handcuffing will be encountered after the first cuff is applied. If resistance is encountered, the “iron wristlock takedown” should be used to re-establish control.

Pressure is exerted on the controlled thumb by pushing it towards the shoulder and down towards the ground. At the same time, the handcuffs are raised onto the back of the hand, while the officer pulls the cuffs toward himself, as he quickly steps straight back.

While employing the iron wristlock takedown, the officer will give the subject loud and repetitive verbal commands to stop him from resisting and get him down onto the ground. After control is established, the second cuff is applied, and both cuffs are double-locked.

Sequence of events relating to the requests put to and the responses of the Administration Wing on 1 and 2 April 2004

<u>Time</u>	<u>Event and Response</u>
1 April 2004 9:30 pm – 10:00 pm	Upon receipt of Police information that 27 students had barged into the Central Government Offices (CGO) compound through the side gate at Lower Albert Road, officers of the Administration Wing (Adm Wing) led by the subject Principal Executive Officer (PEO) arrived separately at the CGO compound. They found that the students had erected two tents on the driveway outside the CGO West Wing. At the same time, over a hundred protestors were seen congregating outside the CGO Main Gate.
10:00 pm – 11:00 pm	<p>Police Communication Relations Officer/Central (PCRO/Central) and Adm Wing officers on the scene had tried to ascertain from the students their request(s) and persuade them to leave the CGO premises, but to no avail.</p> <p>Upon the completion of a public meeting at Chater Garden, more people were seen to have marched up to the CGO. The number of protestors outside the Main Gate was estimated to have increased to 400. Some individuals tried to climb over the gate whilst others shouted for the opening of the gate to let the crowd in.</p> <p>PEO reported the incident to the Director of Administration (D of Adm) who had since also liaised with the Police and ISD officers to keep track of the developments to facilitate a coordinated effective response to the situation.</p>
11:00 pm – 11:30 pm	Three LegCo Members were seen to arrive outside the Main Gate. Through PCRO/Central, a request was put to Adm Wing officers to let in the protestors to join the students inside. Adm Wing officers explained to the protestors that the request could not be acceded to and the CGO was not a public place.

<u>Time</u>	<u>Event and Response</u>
11:30 pm – midnight	<p>LegCo Member A spoke to a Senior Executive Officer (SEO) of Adm Wing and reiterated the demand to let the protestors in. SEO explained why the request could not be acceded to. LegCo Member A then indicated the wish to speak to D of Adm instead. PEO conveyed the message to and also briefed D of Adm on the Police’s assessment of the crowd sentiments on the scene. Accepting that opening the Main Gate at that time would not be an option, D of Adm asked PEO to consult LegCo Member A on any alternative request she might have. In response, LegCo Member A just indicated that D of Adm should put an end to the problem as soon as possible.</p> <p>It was noted that the protestors outside the Main Gate were getting very emotional. The Police had asked the crowd repeatedly to calm down and not to push the Main Gate.</p>
<u>2 April 2004</u> Midnight – 1:30 am	<p>Before D of Adm had the chance to talk to LegCo Member A directly, LegCo Member B, who had been talking to the students, had four telephone conversations with D of Adm between 12:15 a.m. and 1:30 a.m., with a view to mediating an end to the incident.</p> <p>The first demand that LegCo Member B put to D of Adm was that the Chief Executive (CE) or the Chief Secretary (CS) should attend the scene immediately to receive a petition letter from the students there and then. Given the small hours, D of Adm counter proposed to allow in the students in early office hours for them to hand in their petition letter to the CE or a relevant senior official. She also offered to make arrangements for the students to meet with the Constitutional Development Task Force led by the CS as soon as possible, although she could not be specific on the date and time until she was able to talk to members of the Task Force. LegCo Member B undertook to convey the offers to the students. For that matter, LegCo Member B entered the CGO compound by a side gate at around 1:15 a.m.</p>

<u>Time</u>	<u>Event and Response</u>
1:30 am – 3:50 am	<p>Having talked to the students again, LegCo Member B put to PEO various demands for:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">the students to stay overnight in the CGO compound;</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">an immediate decision on the date and time when the Task Force would meet with the students; and</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">the students to go inside the office building and use the toilet facilities.</p> <p>PEO explained the difficulties in acceding to the demands. He also advised the students to make use of the nearby public toilet facilities at Queen’s Road Central within short walking distance.</p>
3:50 am – 6:00 am	<p>At 3:50 am, PEO talked to two student representatives. They reiterated the demands made through LegCo Member B. PEO explained to them again the difficulties. In response to their request to present the petition letter to a directorate officer on the spot, PEO volunteered himself but the offer was not taken up.</p> <p>PEO continued the endeavour to persuade the student representatives to accept D of Adm’s proposals and to leave the CGO compound voluntarily. The students refused.</p> <p>As the repeated discussions and persuasion were to no avail, having consulted the Police, SEO served three verbal warnings to the students between 3:58 am and 4:30 am, urging the students to leave the CGO compound. The students refused.</p> <p>When Adm Wing was about to take action to bring the students away, the students stated that they would be willing to leave the compound of their own accord but through the Main Gate where the crowd congregated. As a result, Adm Wing and the Police started to make necessary arrangements to clear the way for their departure.</p>

<u>Time</u>	<u>Event and Response</u>
	<p>Shortly afterwards, however, the students insisted that they would continue to stay in the CGO compound. Officers of Adm Wing had no alternative but to task the security guards to assist in bringing the students away through a side gate. Action completed at 4:50 am. Parties involved exercised restraints in the course of the action without the need for Police intervention.</p> <p>The students joined the protesters outside the Main Gate. A student representative was seen to be tearing apart a petition letter at around 5:20 am.</p> <p>The reporters who were inside the CGO left by themselves after the students had gone. Neither the Police nor Adm Wing took any action to obstruct these reporters from covering the news in the interim.</p>
After 6:00 am	There were still a large number of protestors gathering outside the Main Gate. PEO requested the Police to keep the driveway to the Main Gate clear to allow the CGO to resume normal operation as it was approaching office hours.